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TELEGRAM

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ACTION MEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AS-02 SY-05 MCT-02 CCO-00
/060 W

-----068233 160945Z /20
O P 160825Z FEB 79
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2215
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABL 1129

E.O. 12065: GDS 2-16-85 (AMSTUTZ, J. BRUCE) OR-M
TAGS: PINS, AF
SUBJ: DEATH OF AMBASSADOR DUBS: MORE ON DRA'S CONDOLENCE
ATTITUDE

REF: KABL 1119

1. AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, ONE OF THE DISAPPOINTING ASPECTS OF THIS TRAGIC AFFAIR HAS BEEN THE SEEMING DILATORY ATTITUDE OF THE DRA WITH RESPECT TO CONDOLENCES ON THE AMBASSADOR'S DEATH. MY LAST MESSAGE ON THIS YESTERDAY (REFTEL) MENTIONED THE STATUS AS OF THAT TIME.

2. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE DRA HAS TAKEN A NUMBER OF MEASURES TO EXPRESS ITS REGRETS OVER THE INCIDENT WHICH IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO APPRECIATE. (A) THE FEBRUARY 14, 1979 ISSUE OF THE KABUL TIMES (AN EVENING PAPER), WHICH IS PERHAPS THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE ORGAN OF THE GOVERNMENT, PUBLISHED A PROMINENT ARTICLE ON PAGE 4 (THE LAST BUT SECOND MOST IMPORTANT PAGE) HEADLINED "TERRORISTS ASSASSINATE U.S. AMBASSADOR IN KABUL." THIS TEN PARAGRAPH ARTICLE GAVE THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED AND EXPRESSED OUTRAGE. THE TEXT IS BEING CABLED AND POUCHED SEPARATELY. (B) THE FEBRUARY
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15 ISSUE OF THE KABUL TIMES GAVE EVEN MORE PROMINENT TREATMENT.

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THERE WAS AN OBITUARY NOTICE WITH A PICTURE OF AMBASSADOR DUBS ON THE FRONT PAGE. (C) ALSO ON THE FRONT PAGE WAS A BRIEF ARTICLE ANNOUNCING, "FLAGS AT HALF MAST TODAY ON US ENVOY'S DEMISE." (COMMENT: AMERICANS DID NOTICE AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AIRPORT, AND AT A NUMBER OF OTHER LOCATIONS IN THE CITY THAT THE DRA FLAG WAS AT HALF MAST.) (D) THE EDITORIAL IN THIS ISSUE OF THE KABUL TIMES, TITLED, "WE CONDEMN ACTS OF TERRORISM," HAS A SEVEN PARAGRAPH ACCOUNT WHICH DENOUNCED THE TERRORISTS' ACTION. THE TEXT IS BEING CABLED SEPARATELY. (E) ON THE FOURTH (AND LAST) PAGE OF THE PAPER THERE WERE THREE RATHER GRUESOME PICTURES OF THE FOUR DEAD TERRORISTS. (COMMENT: THESE ARE PROBABLY BEING PRINTED IN PART AS A WARNING TO OPPOSITIONISTS.) (F) LASTLY, AND MOST IMPORTANT, AT 1200 HOURS KABUL TIME FEBRUARY 16, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER DOST WILL BE CALLING ON ME AT THE EMBASSY TO EXPRESS CONDOLENCES.

3. COMMENT: THE QUESTION WE HAVE BEEN MULLING OVER HERE IS WHY THE GOVERNMENT WAS SLOW IN SENDING CONDOLENCE MESSAGES TO WASHINGTON, AND IN EXPRESSING REGRETS TO THE EMBASSY.

4. I WOULD ANSWER THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN FOUR REASONS. FIRST, IN TERMS OF THE MESSAGES TO WASHINGTON, THESE WERE SENT COMMERCIALY AND HENCE TOOK TIME TO REACH THERE.

5. SECONDLY, WE MUST ALLOW FOR AFGHAN BUREAUCRATIC INEFFICIENCY. FEW DECISION-MAKING POWERS ARE DELEGATED IN THIS AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENT, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT ALMOST ALL DECISIONS ON CONDOLENCE PROCEDURES WENT TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER FOR HIS PERSONAL APPROVAL. SINCE HE RUNS ALMOST EVERYTHING IN THIS COUNTRY, HE IS AN EXTRAORDINARILY BUSY MAN, AND DURING THE
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ACTUAL PERIOD OF THE KIDNAPPING HE WAS IN CONFERENCE WITH THE VISITING IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER. IT PROBABLY TOOK TIME FOR HIM TO FOCUS ON THIS MATTER, ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS FORMALITIES WITH ME AND THE EMBASSY.

6. I WAS FOR SOME HOURS TEMPTED TO THINK TWO OTHER FACTORS MAY HAVE HAD SOME INFLUENCE. ONE WAS THE PRESUMED ANNOYANCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN OVER THE CONTENTS OF THE AFGHANISTAN PORTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT TO CONGRESS, WHICH AMBASSADOR DUBS HAD DELIVERED AND EXPLAINED IN PERSON TO DEPUTY FOREIGN

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MINISTER DOST EARLIER IN THE WEEK. THIS REPORT AS THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS WAS ROUGH ON THE DRA. THE OTHER WAS MY ANGRY TELEPHONIC PROTEST ON BEHALF OF MYSELF, THIS EMBASSY AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE DRA'S HANDLING OF THE TERRORISM INCIDENT.

7. IN JUDGING THE ABOVE, I TEND TO THINK NOW THAT BUREAUCRATIC INEFFICIENCY WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR. AMSTUTZ

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